

This essay is a part of the Scientific American & Macmillan Learning STEM Summit. The STEM Summit is an annual event that attracts diverse stakeholders, ranging from teachers, policy makers, journalists, entrepreneurs, and students. The theme of the 2019 Summit is “The Future of Work,” and will explore critical questions such as: What are we doing to prepare students for careers in our automated future? What skills—both “hard” and “soft”—will students need to thrive in the “4th Industrial Revolution”? And what strategies, tools and technologies will best help students achieve that success? You can learn more about the annual event [here](#), and view the livestream of this year’s Summit [here](#) on Thursday, September 26th.

Over the past half-century, we’ve been incredibly effective at treating school and college as distinct elements from work and a career. Nothing is more indicative of this trend than our belief, inherent in the system we’ve designed, that the best human development arises from being in school for 13 to 17 years and then going to work for the next 45 years or so. This belief, and the system that perpetuates it, has probably *never* worked very well. And it’s entirely broken in today’s globally competitive and rapidly changing marketplace...

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